

2. Unlike the natives of India, the men allow scarce any weight to rest on the head; the entire strain is thrown on the shoulders and back by passing the cord to which the load is attached across the chest. As this mode would with women be attended with inconvenience on account of the *chīp*,<sup>1</sup> besides causing injury to the breasts, the cord is in their case brought over the head,<sup>2</sup> and the back is bent in order to reduce the pressure. 482

3. In his account of a visit to the Nágá Hills, about ten years ago,<sup>3</sup> Mr. S. E. Peal makes allusion to the "peculiar noise, like a whistle or note on a flute, clear and plain, and seeming to come from the chest, made by Nágánis when carrying loads and distressed." The same peculiarity is noticeable under similar circumstances among the Andamanese of both sexes. [142]

4. Running is seldom practised by them except for a short distance, when hunting, &c., and four or five hundred yards appears to be the greatest extent of ground they can cover without halting or slackening speed. Though in running or walking on a good road they are generally passed without difficulty by natives of India, their superiority in the jungles is at once manifest when the beaten track is left; and in the ease and rapidity with which they are able to bound over rocks, fallen trees, mangrove roots, and other obstacles, few, if any, would care, or be able, to compete with them. 481

5. Both coastmen and "junglees" are, as a rule, gifted with extremely keen sight. It was, however, found impossible to gauge their powers by the test papers<sup>4</sup> in consequence of their inability to count; but many satisfactory proofs of their acuteness of vision have been afforded, as, for instance, by the manner in which, while coasting along the shore or when threading their way through the jungle, they detect birds or other objects, so hidden by the dense foliage of their forests as to be hardly distinguishable, even when pointed out, to more than ordinarily sharp-eyed Europeans and others. 151.

6. The inland tribes have especially keen scent, and are able from an almost incredible distance to specify, and direct their steps towards, any particular tree that may happen to be in blossom; their sense of taste is also strongly developed, enabling them to discriminate between the various flowers from which the bees have produced their honey.

7. On the other hand, while the coastmen are not deficient in

<sup>1</sup> Vide Appendix B, No. 24.

<sup>2</sup> A peculiarity in the conformation of the female skull due to this practice will be hereafter noted, under the heading of "Deformations," paragraph 3.

<sup>3</sup> Vide "Journ. Asiat. Soc. Bengal," vol. xli, part 1, 1872.

<sup>4</sup> Viz., those used in the Army for recruiting purposes.

●151 these points, they are found to surpass the natives of the interior in their sense of hearing, which is so acute that they commonly spear turtles on the darkest nights, though able to direct their aim only by the slight sound made by the animal when rising to the surface to take breath. "ng'ab-mū'lwa-" (you deaf person!) is a term of reproach often applied by the coast people to those dwelling inland, in allusion to the admitted inferiority of the latter in this respect.

571 **Psychology and Morals.**—1. It has been remarked with regret by all interested in the race, that intercourse with the alien population has, generally speaking, prejudicially affected their morals; and that the candour, veracity, and self-reliance they manifest in their savage and untutored state are, when they become associated with foreigners, to a great extent lost, and habits of untruthfulness, dependence, and sloth engendered.

2. Though there are some grounds for the opinion hitherto held regarding their fearlessness, our more recent relations with them prove that the surprising courage and apparent utter recklessness of life which they manifested in their early encounters with us were due rather to their ignorance of, and disbelief in, any foe more powerful than themselves, or with means of destruction more deadly than their own. Probably nothing short of despair or uncontrollable rage would ever induce any of them to make an attack in which they have not a decided advantage, real or imaginary. All is regarded as fair in war, and cunning and treachery are considered worthy of commendation; in short, the high type of courage common among most civilised, and a few savage, nations appears to be totally lacking among the Andamanese; nevertheless, those who evince courage are much admired, and poltroons are objects of general ridicule.<sup>1</sup> When apprised of the existence of danger, they usually evince extreme caution, and only venture upon an attack when well assured, that, by their superior numbers, they can put the enemy to flight, or will be able, by stealth, to surprise and overpower him.

3. At the same time certain traits which have been noticeable in their dealings with us would give colour to the belief that they are not altogether lacking in the sense of honour, and have some faint idea of the meaning of justice. An amusing incident is related by Dr. Day on this point. It appears that on a certain

<sup>1</sup> Their conduct on occasions of personal risk is, however, generally governed by the consideration that "discretion is the better part of valour," and that

"He who fights and runs away,  
May live to fight another day."

They thus resemble the South Sea islanders spoken of by Sir J. Lubbock who, "though not cowards, regard it as much less disgraceful to run away from an enemy with whole bones than to fight and be wounded."

261 cannot apparently abstain from food without inconvenience for more than eight hours at a time.

271  
[45] 3. When exerting themselves in any way they perspire freely, which may account for their inordinate thirst. So great, indeed, is their inability to endure any privation in respect to drink, that they seldom leave home on the shortest expedition, whether by land or sea, without providing themselves with one or more bamboo vessels, called *gôb*-, containing a supply of fresh water.

5/3 4. Loss of sleep they can bear well only when under the influence of strong excitement, as in turtle hunting, or at festive gatherings, where singing and dancing are kept up for many successive hours;<sup>1</sup> they have even been known to spend forty-eight hours at such times without taking any rest.

• 151 5. What little cool weather there is in the latitude of their islands, during December and January, they dislike extremely; in striking evidence of this they are found, as I will elsewhere mention,<sup>2</sup> unconsciously concurring with the great Italian poet in depicting the region of punishment, for the souls of the wicked, as one of intense cold. After this, it will appear somewhat strange to say that, in spite of their aversion to what they consider cold weather—which never registers less than 69° F. on the highest elevation in South Andaman—they are careful, during the hot season, to avoid any lengthened exposure to the direct rays of the sun, and endeavour to lessen the discomfort caused by the heat by smearing their persons with a white-wash of common white clay and water.<sup>3</sup> It has long been erroneously believed that they have recourse to this expedient in order to allay the inconvenience which they would otherwise suffer from the bites of mosquitoes and other jungle pests; but the true reason for the practice is, I am well assured, that which I have above given, for the various insects which might annoy them are, for the most part, kept away by the smoke of the hut fire, beside which a great portion of their time is spent when at rest, or when engaged in any sedentary occupation.

147 6. The voices of the men are usually clear without being deep, while those of the women, especially when raised, are very shrill.

142 7. The mucous membrane of the mouth is stained with pigment to a greater degree than was found to be the case with such of the natives of India as were compared with them.

8. The general excellence of the teeth strikes one as remark-

<sup>1</sup> *vide post* "Games and Amusements," paragraph 32.

<sup>2</sup> *vide post* "Religious Beliefs, &c.," paragraph 25.

<sup>3</sup> I would here draw attention to the fact, that while the object in smearing themselves with *ôg*-wash is to keep themselves as cool as possible, they often daub their bodies with *kôî-ôb*- after sundown for the opposite reason, i.e., for the sake of warmth.

individual in the method of tying and knotting the string employed in the manufacture of these missiles;<sup>1</sup> these, however, are often so slight that, even when pointed out, they are scarcely to be detected by a stranger, unless he be one who has bestowed careful attention to the subject. \

7. In their savage state they never attempt to represent any object, and, though they do not appear to possess any natural taste for drawing, they differ from the Australians<sup>2</sup> in the intelligence they display in recognising any familiar form depicted in a sketch; and while no such method for indicating the situation of any place is known or employed among themselves, some of them are quick in understanding a chart of their own country, and are able to point out the sites of their various encampments. 532 151 ●

8. It is hardly necessary to state that they have nothing answering to mile-stones or roadside marks. Swamps are never crossed, but in all cases avoided by circuitous routes; experience seems to have taught them the natural line of fords from salient to salient banks, and, when a creek has to be crossed, they always avail themselves of the advantages thus afforded, even making a detour in order to do so.<sup>3</sup> This applies, however, to those occasions when they are not heavily laden, or are carrying articles liable to be damaged by immersion, or which would hinder them from swimming. 487

**Swimming.**—1. With the exception of some of the *ẽrem-tã-ga*,<sup>4</sup> a knowledge of the art of swimming is common to members of both sexes; the *children* even, learning almost as soon as they can run, speedily acquire great proficiency. In this accomplishment the Andamanese greatly surpass the majority of Europeans, but it is probable that, in competition with an experienced English swimmer, their best men would be distanced in the first few hundred yards, it being not so much for speed, as for the length of time they can remain in the water, that they are remarkable. 481

<sup>1</sup> With reference to this circumstance, it may be mentioned that, a few years ago (1876), five aborigines, concerned in the murder near Kyd Island of some Chinese traders with whom they had had a dispute, were discovered by means of the arrows found on the spot, as these were identified by some of their acquaintances then living at Port Blair.

<sup>2</sup> Brown. [From remarks, however, contained in a recent article, entitled "The Indo-Chinese and Oceanic Races," by Mr. A. H. Keane, which appeared in "Nature" (Jan. 6th, 1881), it would appear that the low estimate of the Australian intellect formed by certain ethnologists is not shared by all, and "many instances are given of their skill even in drawing, a capacity for which was wholly denied them."]

<sup>3</sup> Wells are not dug, but when encamping, whether for days or months, care is always taken that the spot selected be near some fresh-water stream.

<sup>4</sup> The reason of this is obvious, as it is known that the majority of the creeks are fordable in many places within three miles of the coast, even in the rainy season, and, therefore, the necessity of acquiring the art of natation has never been experienced by those permanently resident in the interior.

and an irritable temper indicating a nervous temperament, are by no means rare. The natural good looks of many of the people are injured by the habit of shaving and smearing themselves with greasy red and white pigments. 142

The pleasing appearance of the men is not a characteristic of the women, whose habits of completely shaving the head and profusely smearing themselves, with an early tendency to stoutness and ungainliness of figure and sometimes to pronounced prognathism, frequently make them unattractive objects to Europeans. They are, however, bright and merry even into old age and are under no special social restrictions, have a good deal of influence, and in old age are often much respected. They nevertheless readily and naturally acquiesce in a position of subordination, slavery and drudgery to the men, and are apt to herd together in parties of their own sex. Variation from type is much commoner among the men than the women. 142 562

### III. MENTAL CHARACTERISTICS.

**Sense Development.**—The nerve development of the Andamanese is low, pain is not severely felt and wounds quickly heal. The sense development is normal and instances of unusual acuteness observed are the result of personal training in certain directions and not of heredity, *e.g.*, they will recognise one of themselves at a great distance, but not an unaccustomed object such as a European: they can smell a fire or hear the sound of dancing also at a great distance, but this is because they are always on the look-out for these things and their discernment is a matter of habit and of much consequence to themselves. They can, in short, do well such things as they pay particular or habitual attention to. 147 151

The Andamanese are naturally far sighted, and any near sight observed will be found to be due to leucoma or other disease. In respect to sight, however, they are not more highly gifted than civilized mankind. The colour sense is hardly developed at all and they are what would be called in Europe colour-blind to most colours. Black, white and red are distinguished, but green and blue are not. This is due apparently to want of observation only, as they distinguish between white paint and the white European skin. A good deal of blindness was caused by imported epidemic ophthalmia in 1877. Hearing is not abnormally acute, but is highly trained in matters pertaining to jungle craft. Touch seems to be undeveloped. The sense of smell is highly developed in matters necessary to their existence, but they have no appreciation of artificial scent or of that of flowers which do not denote food, nor can they distinguish by smell that which they cannot see unless it be an object of food. Taste is strongly developed as to honey, distinguishing that deposited from different flowers. They care nothing for scenery and do not decorate themselves with flowers. 151 [64]

**Character.**—In childhood the Andamanese are possessed of a bright intelligence, which, however, soon reaches its climax and the adult may be compared in this respect with the civilised child of ten or twelve. He has never had any sort of agriculture, nor until the English taught him the use of dogs did he ever domesticate any kind of animal or bird, nor did he teach himself to turn turtle or to use hook and line in fishing. He cannot count and all his ideas are hazy, inaccurate and ill-defined. He has never developed unaided any idea of drawing or making a tally or record for any purpose, but he readily understands a sketch or plan when shown him. He soon becomes mentally tired and is apt to break down physically under mental training. 181

He retains throughout life the main characteristics of the child: of very short but strong memory, suspicious of but hospitable to strangers, ungrateful, imitative and watchful of his companions and neighbours, vain and under the spur of vanity industrious and persevering, teachable up to a quickly reached limit, fond of undefined games and practical jokes, too happy and careless to be affected in temperament by his superstitions, too careless indeed to store water even for a voyage, plucky but not courageous, reckless only from ignorance or inappreciation of danger, selfish but not without generosity, chivalry or a sense of honour, petulant, hasty of temper, entirely irresponsible and childish in action in his wrath and equally quick to forget, affectionate, lively in his movements and exceedingly taking in his moments of good temper. At these times the Andamanese are gentle and pleasant to each other, considerate to the aged, the

documented the fact in a number of photographs. The purpose, however, is purely hygienic: an unpainted body is, in their opinion, exposed to certain illness. They explained this belief to me by saying that without paint the body becomes "hot". The men who travelled with me far from women were anxious every day to spread clay on face, chest and limbs, just to avoid "heat" or, in other words, fever. I thought of malaria, but they do not suffer from it. Of this I will speak later on. [62]

Rough clay is applied daily, on infant bodies as well as on adults, for health purposes. It is used to cure all kinds of sickness, together with ochre, turtle fat and honey. Honey spread on wounds appears to hasten healing. Identical curative methods are employed in Oceania. They probably existed among the Tasmanians, and are still used in Australia by the aborigines. I found nothing of the kind in Africa, where honey is plentiful. The Onge consider clay, ochre, honey and turtle fat good for external and internal treatment alike - both preventive and curative. Powdered bees' wax of a dark colour is often added. I saw mothers give their children, as a laxative, a number of pills made of similar ingredients. No bigger than common hazelnuts, the pills are red and greasy. In Onge forests I saw some small excavations, a few feet deep, made to extract the medicinal clay from special ground pockets. In its natural form the clay is light coloured, powdery and free of stones. When it is burnt the colour changes, assuming red, yellow, whitish or black shades according to the different qualities used, all believed to possess healing properties and to ensure hygienic colouring of the body. Mixed as described above, clay is used by the Onge in every circumstance from fever to snake or scorpion bite, constipation, breast infection in women, or post-delivery bleeding. [751, 757, 302, 854, 752, 171, 825, 317, 386]

Belief in the medicinal properties of clay is as old as humanity itself. Even among contemporary European peoples, notwithstanding severe criticism, clay is still honoured as health-giving, not, I must say, on wholly foolish grounds. The Onge, who smear their bodies constantly with clay, have the softest, most velvety skin that I ever saw anywhere in the world. Wounds spread with clay mixed with honey and fat leave negligible scars. The laxative and germ-killing action of clay is admitted by physicians in many countries, including Europe. It never causes infection. Geophagism has ancient origins, and we find it practiced by many modern populations. Children of every race and all young wild animals lick clay instinctively to absorb the mineral salts required by a developing organism. The Onge habit of using clay for healing purposes can be set, therefore, in a very wide frame. [757, 171, 823, 752]

Mental and nervous disorders are rare in Little Andaman. Few natives are subject to epilepsy - an important matter for the Onge: they consider such people as possessed by spirits who speak through their mouths, and respectfully question them as oracles. Several Onge chiefs, such as Chief Tchôtâ of Tambê-ê-buiê, are apt to go into trances that have all the appearance of epileptic fits. They were elected chiefs on the strength of their epilepsy! [164, 828, 158, 622, 787]

Constant exercise keeps eyesight and hearing extremely sharp in the Onge. I saw no single case of myopia or presbyopia among the natives, nor [164, 151]

164 do they suffer from the eye infections that are so common in the tropics. Their  
151 highly trained eye can distinguish at a great distance small vessels on the  
troubled waters of the sea that people with normal eyesight could not perceive  
without a telescope. Normal vision, I suppose, is the same for the entire human  
123 race; but we exercise our eyesight less. In the dark fastness of the jungle, the  
151 Onge were able to point out birds sitting motionless high up in the trees,  
quite invisible to me notwithstanding my experience in collecting even the  
tiniest specimens. With their sharp eyes they sought out for me a collection  
of minute mimetic amphibians living far from the ground on tree trunks,  
previously unknown to science. The same thing often happened when I was  
unable to see as far as they did. The help of my savage friends was invaluable  
in avoiding the poisonous snakes that we met with daily in our camps or while  
travelling. For our protection, the Onge always marched in front of my men.  
They could discern reptiles hanging from branches among thick foliage, wait-  
ing to bite us on the neck, or lying perfectly still in the tall grass, ready to  
attack our legs. The only trouble we had with snakes was when the men I had  
brought from India, in moments of enthusiasm ran ahead into the interior  
of the jungle, eluding their Onge vanguard.

752 The Onge themselves, however, are sometimes bitten by snakes, with  
123 dire consequences. Happily the Andamanese snakes are less deadly than the  
136 same species on the continent, and few deaths occur from snake bite; but it  
[322] can curtail a man's activity for several months. In March 1953 an Onge friend  
of about 25 who had climbed a tall tree to collect honey, inadvertently seized  
with his left hand a snake concealed in a tuft of creepers, and was bitten above  
the elbow. Frightful swelling ensued, together with shooting pains and a  
raging fever. The man was brought to me unconscious, his left arm had already  
assumed the appearance of a huge, rigid, elongated sausage. The Onge had  
smeared all his body, and particularly the wounded arm, with ochre mixed  
with honey, turtle fat and rough clay. They have no specific remedy for snake  
bite. It was too late, but in an attempt to save the patient an antiophidic  
injection was practiced on him. Within a few hours he appeared to rally. I saw  
him again after eleven days; his arm had been treated in the Onge way and  
put in a sling made of ficus bark cut into narrow strips. Fever had disappeared,  
and in part also the swelling, so he could move his elbow a little. The skin  
peeled off the whole length of the arm. Where the fangs had entered the flesh  
two round, red, suppurating wounds, 1 cm in diameter, were discernible under a  
layer of clay and honey. The man recovered in about two months. During his  
476 illness the people who shared his communal hut exempted him, his wife and his  
children from all work, and supplied them with all requirements. This occurs in  
every case of illness, showing the complete solidarity that prevails among those  
simple people - once considered ferocious. Always, if the wife is ill, the husband  
is automatically relieved of his hunting, fishing and food-collecting duties.  
Friends provide food for the family, no matter how many the members thereof.

164 In Little Andaman, we Europeans are constantly threatened with mala-  
143 ria. Should we fail to take all necessary precautions we would catch it upon  
setting foot on the island. The Onge are all infected, but it does not upset

Onges

## THE ANDAMAN ISLANDERS

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[481] Many Onges, in fact, have fine features, and some of the women have a certain beauty and grace of movement, with a dignified walk and restrained gestures, despite their utter lack of any sense of shame. The sclera are very white, and the highly characteristic contrast between the intense black of the skin and the startling white of the eyes gives the Andamanese a ferocious appearance, which on smiling turns into a curiously childish expression (see further, p. 19). It is a curious fact that although the Onges have remarkable sight (p. 47), few of them can close each eye separately, although they are all completely ambidextrous.

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145 In examining the child I had particularly in mind the very short stature of the pygmies both of Asia and Africa, which is regarded by some as pathological. The Andamanese have been described as Negroes who have degenerated through genetical isolation. This theory holds that they are descended from slaves who fled from the Portuguese after a shipwreck. I do not regard this as tenable. Pygmies in general, and the Andamanese in particular, are well-proportioned and physically outwardly normal. One cannot speak of dwarfism as determining their characteristics: this implies abnormal development as the result of hypophyseal disorder or thyroid imbalance. Cases of achondroplastic dwarfism are known [43] among the pygmies of Africa, particularly where there has been mixing with Negroes, and these patients are sometimes taller than their normal kinfolk, but I found no cases among the pygmies of Asia.

142 One characteristic of the Bushmen which does occur among the Andamanese is steatopygia in both males and females. This is normally much more prevalent in females, and indeed before my visit to the Andamans von Eickstedt held that it was non-existent in males. I had always disagreed with this view, and was able to verify its occurrence in both males and females.

[114] Dobson in the nineteenth century recorded in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* of London, the unusual appearance of the buttocks in the Andamanese, although he did not specifically refer to the phenomenon as steatopygia, and went only so far as to suppose it the result of an unusual accumulation of fat in the gluteal area. To him, however, must go the credit for the first observation.

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144 His observation led scientists - in my view wrongly - to compare the Andamanese with the Bushmen. The presence of steatopygia,

CHAPTER THREE

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## The Spirits of the Forest

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487 It is only too easy to get lost in the forests, but this never happens with the Onges. They do not rely upon the 'mysterious sense of direction' which is often attributed (without adequate evidence) to primitive peoples; they have other simpler but equally effective ways of finding their way. Everywhere the Onges go they leave behind some mark. When they come to a halt in the depths of the forest, they cast around them, and soon find signs leading to some temporary shelter or communal hut.

As the Onges are out in the forest every day, there are traces of their passage everywhere. Inconspicuously broken plants, or scratches on the branches of trees are precious marks, one leading to the next and so on to the camp. Everyone takes care not to get lost, and moves carefully through the sea of vegetation, without appearing to mark their way. I have often been surprised to find myself back at the camp after innumerable twists and turns, but the Onges' exceptional eyesight saved us when the situation seemed to me quite hopeless.

805 They were always able, too, to calculate exactly how far to go in one stage, and could invariably tell me precisely when we should arrive at a given point. They have no form of clock and work solely by the sun's position. But whatever their method, every time I asked when we should reach a certain camp, they always replied at great length: they would point with one outstretched arm to *Tenculu* the Sun and then with the other to where it would be when we arrived. The passing of days was indicated by moving an arm from east to west, saying *Tenculu - Tenculu*, to show sunrise and sunset. It was a simple matter to work out what they meant, and their answer was invariably right.

# THE SPIRITS OF THE FOREST

on later visits. Dr H. Lehmann found no evidence of syphilis in the fifty-two individuals of both sexes from whom he took blood samples in my presence. <sup>164</sup>  
[14]

Although the Onges are normally healthy and look outwardly robust, they have very little actual resistance to disease and succumb very quickly. Twenty-eight of them, whole families, young and old, whom I took with me to Port Blair in 1954 to present them to the President of the Republic of India, all developed a high fever owing to the change in their way of life during the few days it took from Little Andaman to Great Andaman, and we had to take them back hastily to their own island immediately after the official visit. Even minor feverish complaints of no importance seem to depress and terrify them so that they die very quickly, and I sometimes heard that young Onge friends whom I had left in excellent health had died suddenly from, so I was told, some febrile complaint. The Onge women have better resistance than their menfolk to disease as a whole, which may also help to explain their greater longevity. [23]

On the other hand wounds heal surprisingly quickly in both sexes, although in some of the old men I saw purulent leg sores, slow to heal even when treated with antiseptics which I applied myself. I saw none of these in women, but they seem to be more severely attacked by ringworm, especially on the abdomen and round the umbilicus. Few of the Onges were free from ringworm but none of them bothered to treat it, and it did not seem to cause them any noticeable disturbance. In one woman I noticed whitish patches on the fingers and lips, due to leucoderma.

Diseases of the nervous system and mental illnesses seem very rare, although a few individuals are subject to attacks of epilepsy, watched reverently by all present! The Onges regard epileptics as possessed by a spirit capable of giving important information and question them like the oracle. A number of the Onge leaders, among them Giota of Tambe-e-buiè, go from time to time into a state of trance, which has every appearance of an epileptic attack. I saw one case of dementia in a middle-aged woman, but it was mild enough to allow her to go about her work reasonably well, and at regular intervals she produced normal children. <sup>158</sup>  
[187]

Sight and hearing in the Onges are particularly acute, as has often been reported in primitive peoples and attributed to the <sup>151</sup>

## THE ANDAMAN ISLANDERS

- 151 regular exercise of the two faculties required by their existence in direct contact with the natural world; anyone, it is said, who lived such a life would preserve the same keenness of eye and ear.

[164] Certainly I saw no myopia among the Onges, nor any of the eye infections common among other inhabitants of the tropics. With the naked eye they can pick out tiny craft far out to sea, or the small, narrow Onge canoes which I could hardly see with field-glasses, which makes me doubt whether constant exercise of the eyes can really be the full explanation of their power of vision. They can pick out quickly and accurately birds immobile among the dense leaves in the darkest part of the forest, invisible to me, even though I was used to looking for them and could see them when they moved. And from the ground they saw high in the trees tiny amphibia which I wanted to catch, after I had caught one by chance which had proved to be a new species. These amphibia, perfect mimics, become almost invisible when they attach themselves to the bark of the trees, but the Onges pointed them out to me from a distance with absolute accuracy, and I was in fact able in 1954 to catch over two hundred in a week.<sup>1</sup>

825 The Onges can also pick out reptiles on the ground, or among  
151 the foliage, distinguishing with long practice the poisonous  
114 varieties which abound in the islands, and I found it very useful to send Onges ahead of me in the forest to look out for these snakes. When any of my Indians were bitten it was always because they thought they could do as well as the local scouts! The Onges themselves are, however, occasionally bitten, with serious consequences. One of them, aged twenty-five, climbed into a very high tree after honey, and unwittingly put his left hand on a snake hidden in the leaves, where it had climbed to search for birds' eggs. It bit just above the elbow, causing an alarming swelling of the arm with severe pain and fever. He was brought to me semi-conscious, with the whole limb swollen to the size of a rugby ball. The unfortunate  
[152] man's neck had been bound with the usual strands of *Ficus* bark, and not surprisingly he was groaning desperately, and clearly on the point of death.

752 The Onges have no specific remedies for snake bites, and their  
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[136] <sup>1</sup> These amphibia were examined in 1954 at the Institute of Zoology of the University of Genoa and given the name of *Kakula balata ghoshii*, in honour of Mr A. K. Ghosh, then Governor of the Andamans.